

Robert Frost's Winter Home For Sale

By Wayne Markham
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"The house had gone to bring again.
"To the midnight sky a sunset glow.
"Now the chimney was all of the house that stood.
"Like a pistil after the petals go."

—Robert Frost from "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things"

MIAMI—Robert Frost's winter home, unlike the one depicted in his verse, still stands in a sun-dappled glade near South Miami.

Tuesday, the owners put the tiny clapboard cottage up for sale. The asking price: \$295,000.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph F. Havel of Pawleys Island, S.C., decided to sell Frost's former winter residence four weeks after the Miami Metro Historic Preservation Board voted to designate the 40-year-old prefabricated home a historic site. The designation means the cottage, and a companion one on the property, can't be altered without a certificate from the Historic Preservation Board.

The Havels were not consulted before the board acted, according to their real estate broker, Raymond G. Asmar.

Frost acquired the property in 1940, a year after his wife, Elinor, died. The four-time Pulitzer Prize winner cleared away thick foliage by hand and planted grapefruit, mango and loquat trees. He called his winter hideaway Pencil Pines.

Frost spent every winter here between 1942 and his death in 1963 at age 89. A caretaker lives in the companion cottage next door. Ironically, the thickly overgrown property, replete with live oak trees, fruit trees, a lily pond, bromeliads and orchids, is worth more than his clapboard cottage.

The Dade County property assessment values the land at \$151,900. The two cottages, each only 650 square feet, are assessed at \$11,378. The Havels purchased both cottages and 1.9 acres of land in 1966 for \$27,500.

Asmar says the cottage once occupied by Frost has been vacant for years. There is no kitchen, "just a little fireplace, a small living area, one bedroom and a bath."

"It has to be the most unusual property I've ever listed," says Asmar.